THE CHURCH, AGGRESSIVE:

THE SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE CONVENTION

OF THE

DIOCESE OF PENNSYLVANIA,

IN ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA,

MAY 27, 1863,

BY EDWIN MARTIN VAN DEUSEN, D.D.,

RECTOR OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH, PITTSBURGH.

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SERMON.

"There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed."—Joshua xiii. 1.

After the appointment by the ecclesiastical authority to be your preacher on this occasion had been accepted, I was not a little embarrassed by the want of a prescript definition of a *Convention Sermon*. It could not be *simply* a "*concio ad clerum*," for not only are there lay members present, but they may be double, and even treble, the number of the clergy. The presentation of novel speculations in Theology, or the discussion of greatly controverted doctrines, would seem to be out of place, because we assemble for no such purposes, and this body cannot be said, strictly speaking, to have "authority in controversies of faith." The class of appropriate topics, therefore, seemed to be narrowed down to the practical and simple, and, it appeared, should have relation to our common duties and responsibilities. We are representatives and delegates in a single Commonwealth, to consult, legislate, and plan, for the good of Christ's kingdom. Our work is local, within a given number of square miles, and for the population within these limits; and an effort will be made to find here, as I proposed to have done, on a former occasion, if I had not been Providentially

prevented,* a theme for some practical instruction to *us*, the *clergy* and *laity*, of Pennsylvania. If we look only to the abundant labors, as found recorded in the annual addresses of our Bishops, the cheering reports that are brought here by the clergy, of *their* work, and the aggregate increase of each decade, or score of years, we may indeed "thank God and take courage;" but when we compare these results with the extent of the field—the entire population of the State—we cannot escape the painful, humiliating conviction, that we have done really little; while that vast, unoccupied, and even unvisited territory proclaims, "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." The truth of these words is seen in the fact that of the whole number of counties in the State, sixty-five, the Church is found in only forty-four; and that of these, nineteen have only one congregation in each; so that there are only twenty-five counties that have two or more organized parishes, being a little more than one-third the whole number in the State. The comparison is still more humiliating, when we consider that in a population of more than three millions, we cannot claim seventy-five thousand, as belonging to our worshipping assemblies, and number less than fourteen thousand communing members. We are obliged to confess the sad fact, that there are large villages, towns and counties, in which the voice of bishop, priest or deacon, has never been heard; and that in this old and noble State, where the Church has been planted in her integrity since 1787, when Bishop White was consecrated, and still longer imperfectly, there are multitudes who have never heard, or seen, her sublime and incomparable liturgy; and very

* The author was hindered by severe illness from preaching the Convention Sermon in 1862.

many live, who have never known her name, or even existence. There are thickly settled neighborhoods, and flourishing districts, within ten, twenty, and thirty miles of parishes, that have been established for more than half a century, and yet the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, as authorized by this Church, has not once been heard, or seen among them. When we remember that our Lord Himself gave us an image of his kingdom in the "leaven hid in meal till the whole is leavened,"* that His Apostle has told us that it is the nature of a "little leaven to leaven the whole lump,"† that "every creature"‡ is the only final limit of the Church's work; and that therefore the point and burden of our special prayer on these great occasions of our solemn gathering, is, that "the comfortable Gospel of Christ may be truly preached, truly received, and truly followed *in all places;*"§ we can at once perceive that a problem of the first importance, truly practical, allowing no delay, and in which each one is deeply concerned, presents itself—why is this state of things? why are we comparatively so weak at home, in our own State and Diocese? why "remaineth there yet so much land to be possessed?" Various answers may be made to these interrogatories, and different solutions of this problem offered; but there is one that is primary, relates to a fundamental principle and chief mark of Christianity, which gives force to all others, and to which I propose to address myself this morning, viz: *the want of a true and practical appreciation of the Gospel in the Church, in its assimilating and aggressive character; assimilating,* not as does the artisan by moulding, beating and forming the metal after a given

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* St. Matthew xiii. 33.

† 1 Corinthians v. 6.

‡ St. Mark xvi. 15.

§ Prayer at Meetings of Convention.

pattern, in the use of physical force; but like the leaven, by fermentation, by being gifted of the Holy Spirit to awaken zeal, love for souls, move her human agents to go forth bearing the seed of her living truths, and watching them till they have matured in a blessed harvest; *aggressive*, not like a resistless army, nor a mighty avalanche from the mountain, nor a maddened torrent, for "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation;"* but like the quiet stream that fertilizes as it flows, noiselessly finding its way along the peaceful valley; like the morning light, vivifying, refreshing, cheering, and beautifying the whole world of animate beings, while there is neither violence, nor voice, nor sound, in the exertion of its influence and power. I say, *here* and *now*, and take the *bold position*, that there is not, among us, a true understanding and appreciation of the *aggressive, permeating character and tendency* of Christianity, and that we have lost sight, in one of its aspects, of a most important and instructive mark and feature, impressed by its divine Author. I am aware that such an assertion is not sanctioned by generally received opinions, and therefore, will appear to many paradoxical; and, perhaps, suggest to some that question used of one of old, "doth he not speak parables?"† But it is believed that sufficient proof exists to establish the position; and, if so, the sooner the opposite opinion is abandoned the better. Of course, Christianity is here spoken of in its relation to our own State, and this Christian country, in which there "remaineth yet so much land to be possessed." If we send it among the heathen, we cannot fail to recognize its aggressive power, because it can make progress in no other way, and we ac-

* St. Luke xvii. 20.

† Ezekiel xx. 49.

knowledge that all heathen claim our offerings, love, and labor, for their evangelization. But at *home* we discriminate, because we fail to perceive the same aggressive element; and, therefore, are contented in seeing the Church prosper, and increase in *certain places*, rather than extend *everywhere;* our aim is for *centralization* rather than *diffusion;* we imitate collectively, as an organized body, the example of some clergymen, and congregations in our large cities, who prefer to have a vast, and influential parish, with a church so crowded that all new applicants must be refused, rather than to colonize in destitute districts, and send pioneers to gather in the perishing multitudes; so we collectively seek our strength in the more prominent places—aim to reach the influential and the educated—are disposed to rest satisfied, if we are firmly planted at the strongholds, while we neglect the outlying territory, "pass by on the other side" from the multitude, and are unknown in the larger portions of our State and country. We are seemingly unconscious that we are entrusted with God's treasure, given for *general* distribution, and not to enrich and exalt a *few;* that it is for *extension* and *diffusion*, and that the question of the Apostle to certain at Corinth has a peculiar import for us, "What! came the word of God out from you, or came it unto you only?"*

But you very naturally become impatient for the proof that there is no *true appreciation* of the *aggressive character of the Gospel.* Our first appeal for testimony will be to the clergy, as they must necessarily be regarded as most responsible in this matter. If we were asked to define, in the briefest manner possible, our conceptions of our office and work; could we find an English word that

* 1 Corinthians xiv. 36.

so fully comprehends, and expresses them, as *pastorate?* the ministry is a *pastorate.* We imbibe the idea at the very beginning of our preparation, as candidates for the sacred office. We are taught by a Professor of *Pastoral* Theology, from the most approved text-books, that have been written by learned divines, who have had the largest experience, not in searching the wilderness, and bringing home the wanderers, but in *parochial* labor. In looking into the future, under the influence of such training, the Christian student pictures to himself the delightful work, not of seeking and collecting, but of leading and guiding the Lord's *flock.* It is a *fold* already gathered; and although he may add to it from time to time, and wanderers may be brought home; yet his principal duty is to feed, and watch, and guard, for the Chief Shepherd's coming. And his views do not materially change when he enters upon his work; it is still a *pastorate,* in *name* and in *reality.* It is true, he will make inroads, at different times, upon the kingdom of sin, Satan and death. The Gospel will assert its *aggressive* power, wherever it is presented, whether *he* appreciate it or not—but you will not find that he looks for a large increase from this source; and consequently his chief thoughts will be given to the Lord's family already gathered; while his accessions will be expected from immigration, from that portion of the population who have been, at some former period, connected with the Church, descended from Episcopal parents, or had their attention drawn to it by newly formed social relations, or disaffection with some other religious body. The outside community, in the place of his residence, is not regarded as the field of his labor—as promising any large returns for his efforts—as having anything in the way of taste, inclination, or mental and

spiritual organization, to which the Church can appeal with much prospect of success. And still less thought does he give to those places where she is unknown; and would as soon expect returns from a soil entirely unfitted for the kind of seed deposited, as look for increase there. The laity, as a natural consequence, are under a similar conviction; and therefore we find that the work of Church extension progresses no faster, than her members may go to new places, or each organized congregation may draw in, by virtue of contact; or become overgrown, and compelled to divide; or members of the parish in the larger towns may migrate to new positions, and become the nucleus of a living and strong body. The primary, and all-important conception of ourselves, however, is as *pastors*, and not *evangelists;* and pastors must always have a distinct flock, while evangelists need only living men, who are to be gathered into the sacred fold. If we call ourselves missionaries, or aid in sending others as such, we never think of going to any places, except where some few at least hold our principles, desire our services, and are ready to receive us. But when our Saviour compared His kingdom to *leaven*, did He intimate that some of the same element had been incorporated with the body before, as a condition of its assimilation, and diffusion? When at the opening Spring-time, the seed is deposited in the earth, must some unseen hand have scattered a similar kind of seed previously, before the second deposit can vegetate, and yield a harvest? Did Paul wait till some other, and unknown power had planted the truth in Greece and Rome, before he felt justified in preaching there "Jesus and the resurrection?" Did Philip hear there were churches in Samaria, who desired him to come, and help them; before he went, and gathered,

and baptized that company of converts, upon whom the two apostles afterwards laid hands,* in the rite of Confirmation? They knew a better fact; that they were entrusted with that Gospel "whose seed is in itself"†—a power of God, given for diffusion and extension. Do *we* limit it—pronounce labor lost among the mass of dying men for whom it is designed, because some at least are not already its advocates; and make no effort for its progress, except in some favored places, where human wisdom has pronounced the work possible; we give the best evidence that we want a right appreciation of the character of Christianity, in its relation to all those who are living without its hopes, no matter where found.

It will be interesting, and instructive, to inquire here, for the probable origin of this misconception, and wrong impression, relative to this important feature, and mark of the Gospel. We find upon a careful examination that it is part of a *tradition*, that dates back beyond the English Reformation, far into the dark ages. But, beginning with that great event, we are met with the singular, and inexplicable fact, that with the wonderful awakening of that period—high appreciation of the value of God's Word—purity of doctrine, and holiness of life—zeal in condemning and abolishing folly and superstition, and restoring the Church according to the primitive model—there should have been inaugurated no measures for *Church extension;* but the practical influence of the idea should seem not to have been known. With Christianity planted in all parts of the land, under the sanctions of both civil and ecclesiastical law—its principles incorporated into all important legislation, and the people generally acknowledging its authority, if not always faithfully obeying its commands;

* Acts viii. 17. † Genesis i. 11.

the conception of a wider diffusion among themselves, and in other parts of the world, if it existed, appears not to have prompted to any considerable effort or important agency for the purpose. Even when some of those devoted spirits who projected the first colonies to this country, or those who afterward periled their fortunes, comforts, and lives, on these then inhospitable shores, used this motive of planting the Gospel, and their beloved Church; and told the nation in their appeal, that one of their objects was "to cast down the altars of devils, that they might raise up the altar of Christ; to forbid the sacrifice of men, that they might offer up the sacrifice of contrite spirits; to reduce barbarism and infidelity to civil government and Christianity,"* they received no favorable response, awakened no sympathy, but met opposition and ridicule, and were regarded as visionary enthusiasts. Those noble men, and large-hearted Christians, to whom the Church in America owes such a debt of gratitude, among whom may be named Hakluyt, Sutcliff, Sandys, Southampton, John and Nicolas Ferrar, and De la War, were regarded as "beside themselves;" and therefore we need not be surprised at the plain and pointed language found in the first missionary sermon ever preached by a clergyman of the Church of England to those that were to carry her faith and doctrine to the new world. Rev. William Crawshaw said, February 21, 1609, after speaking of the anxiety for pecuniary gains, and indifference in regard to the dissemination of the Gospel, "Tell them of getting XX in the C (that is, twenty pounds in the hundred), O how they bite at it; O how it stirres them. But tell them of planting a church, of converting ten thousand

* Church Review, January, 1862, p. 455. True Declaration, &c., 66–68.

souls to God, they are as senselesse as stones: nay, they smile at the simplicitie, and laugh in their sleeves at the silliness of such as engage in these matters."* And to show still more conclusively the absence at that time of any true idea or knowledge of the aggressive character of the Church, an interesting incident may be mentioned connected with the publication of the poems of the Country Parson, the sainted Herbert. In his poem, "The Church Militant,"† in which he so quaintly describes the extension of the Gospel from the East to the West, and which was written about 1619, when the Church of England was not yet planted here, there is found this couplet,

"Religion stands on tip-toe in our land,
Ready to pass to the American strand."‡

When the work was first sent to the Vice-Chancellor to be licensed for the press, such was the sad state of public feeling, and such the want of interest in the spread of Christianity, that we are told he would not permit these two lines to be printed. But when remonstrances and arguments were used, and the poem was refused for publication, if these words were to be suppressed, the Vice-Chancellor yielded with this significant language, "I knew Mr. Herbert well, and knew that he had many heavenly speculations, and was a divine poet; but I hope the world will not take him to be an inspired prophet,

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* Anderson, vol. I, p. 191. Church Review, January, 1862, p. 465.

† Herbert's Life Works, p. 54. Church Review, January, 1862, p. 462.

‡ It has been sometimes asserted that the author's design was to set forth his belief that religion was ready to pass to America, because it was dying out in England; and therefore the Vice Chancellor was not willing to endorse the lines by consenting to their publication. But such a construction does not militate against the view in the sermon, that the incident furnishes striking proof of the general indifference in regard to the more extensive diffusion of the Gospel.

and therefore I license the whole book." And so little did our forefathers, in the mother country, realize the duty of sending the truth of God to every creature, or even to all in their own land, and to their fellow countrymen who had emigrated to the new world, that it was not till some eighty years after, till three generations had passed away, that the work of disseminating the Gospel assumed a definite form, and commanded the services of any considerable number of the clergy and laity. In 1699, originated the "Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge," and in 1701 that for the "Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts:" the first organizations known in that land of great and glorious enterprises, which aimed at more general evangelization. And yet *they* grew out of the fact, that their own people had gone abroad, principally to this continent, and were unable to have the Gospel in the Church, and the means of religious knowledge, without some such instrumentalities. Their primary object was to benefit their own brethren; if others shared their advantages, as tens of thousands did, it was not because their necessities had first awakened interest, and called forth liberal offerings. When great opposition was made to the growth of the Church in New England, and her ministers were pronounced *intruders*, the fact was stated repeatedly that the only object was to provide for her own members, and that diffusion of her principles was no part of her plan. One authority states boldly and confidently, speaking of the Propagation Society, "upon the best inquiry we have been enabled to make, we cannot find a *solitary instance* of a Missionary having been sent by the Society into New England, but upon the request of the people themselves. It was the practice of the Society not to send

a Missionary to any place before the inhabitants applied for him. Nay, in some instances, in New England, the people not only asked for a Missionary, but at their own expense actually erected church edifices before the Society sent any clergyman to them."* There is here surely no evidence, as it is believed there is not elsewhere, of a purpose to extend the Church to strangers in new places; that, as the kingdom of Christ, it was to *leaven the mass;* but, on the contrary, the distinct avowal that the primary, if not the only design, was to perform an act of common justice, and humanity, to those of the same household of faith. The results however were glorious, and the Church wonderfully asserted her aggressive power, though it was not appreciated. So, too, in all those efforts before our Revolution to secure an American Episcopate, a similar fact was developed. Its most zealous advocates seem never to have thought of an ambassador of the Lord, who, like the Apostles, was to go forth as a pioneer, lead the way in carrying the Gospel to new districts and regions, and gain new accessions to the flock; but the principal reasons for desiring the proposed establishment of bishops in the colonies were these, as stated in the writings of Archbishop Secker, and others deeply interested, "the want of confirmation, the need for superintendence of the conduct of the clergy, and especially the saving candidates the trouble, cost and risk of a voyage to, and from England, in procuring ordination."† The only declared purposes then, were to save the expense and lives of candidates for holy orders, the expense being at least £100, and nearly one-fifth having lost their lives, *government*

* Collections of the P. E. Historical Society, Note p. 147.—1851.

† Collections, &c., p. 149.

of the clergy, and *confirmation*, with no provisions for making new disciples, "preaching to every creature," and baptizing in the name of the sacred Three. And can we say much more in our own favor? We obtained the Episcopate in 1784 and 1787,* and it was not till nearly half a century afterward, 1832, that the present presiding Bishop, the venerable Bishop of Connecticut, made that extensive tour of inspection through the West and extreme South, which was preceded by the first Missionary organization the American Church had known, in 1820-21,† of which the annual average contributions were about $1500.‡ But that tour was made to inquire into the condition of the scattered members of the Church, and the published purpose of that Society was to provide for their spiritual wants; thus simply following the example of the Church of England. In the selection of every station, and the sending of every missionary, to the present time, one of the conditions, actually, if not prescribed, has always been that it shall contain some who have been educated in the Church, or especially desire her services; and it is believed that not an instance can be found in the history of our general, or Diocesan Missions, where an effort has been made without this condition; social, pecuniary, or some other motive must carry an element of Episcopal strength and influence to each place, before the Church will bestow her gifts, and send her messenger; and then she *professes* to provide primarily for the necessities of her destitute children, impressing, and gathering others being the secondary consideration. This is the motive employed almost universally in awakening public interest, and calling forth contributions; we are asked

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* Bp. Seabury, consecrated, 1784, Bp. White, 1787.

† See Journal of General Convention. ‡ Report of the Society.

to provide spiritual privileges for those members of the Church who, by their condition, are deprived of them in their distant homes, and one of our most beautiful hymns, embodies, simply and exclusively, this same idea, and appeals to the example of the Mother Church.

"When, Lord, to this our Western land,
Led by Thy providential hand,
  Our wandering *fathers* came,
Their ancient homes, their friends in youth,
Sent forth the heralds of Thy truth,
  To *keep* them in Thy name.

And oh, may we repay this debt
To regions solitary yet,
  Within our spreading land:
There, *brethren*, from our *common home*,
Still Westward, like our fathers, roam;
  Still guided by Thy hand."*

There is nowhere to be found the recognition of the claims of the vast multitude lying outside the Church's enclosure—no evidence of a purpose to plant an aggressive power in their midst; yet, thank God, in some degree it has been done in some few districts; not, in the first place, because of those multitudes, but because she felt the obligation of caring for her own household. Thus by contact, by the labors of her devoted clergy, and the Spirit of God, she has "lengthened her cords and strengthened her stakes,"† and her growth is the best evidence of her *diffusive* capacity, even though her human agents may still be ignorant of it in no small degree through an injurious *tradition*.

Another source of this misconception may be said to be the Ordinal, both for priests and deacons; and this

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* Hymn 105.

† Isaiah liv. 2.

language will not appear harsh, nor presumptuous, when its meaning is explained. There is nothing in the "Ordering of Deacons," and not a sentence, part of a sentence, and perhaps it may be truly said, not even a word, in all the minute vows required of the candidate for the priesthood, that sets forth the Gospel as an *aggressive* agency, or that makes it the duty of the clergy to plant it where it is unknown. There is a single expression in the exhortation,* and one in the prayer† before the laying on of hands in the ordination of priests, which may be regarded as referring to these important topics; but the one idea prevailing throughout, is the work of the *pastorate*—a church and congregation are pre-supposed to exist, over whom the candidate is to be placed; and therefore the questions, and exhortations of the service follow naturally and properly; "Will you diligently read the Scriptures unto the people assembled in the church where you shall be appointed to serve?" "Will you instruct, out of the said Scriptures, the people committed to your charge?" "Will you use both public and private monitions, and exhortations, as well to the sick, as to the whole within your cure?" "Make yourself and family wholesome examples, and patterns to the flock of Christ, and maintain quietness, peace, and love, &c., among them that are, or shall be committed to your charge?" "Your office is to teach, and to premonish, to feed, and to provide for the

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* "To seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ forever."

† "Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Doctors, and Pastors; by whose labour and ministry He gathered together a great flock in all parts of the world, &c. For these so great benefits of Thy eternal goodness, and for that Thou hast vouchsafed to call these Thy servants here present to the *same Office and Ministry, appointed for the salvation of mankind*, &c."

Lord's family." "The Church and congregation whom you must serve, is His Spouse and His Body." When we consider that these Offices were set forth by the Church of England, at a time when all the people were embraced in parochial bounds, and she was, as she is now, the Church of the nation—when she had not a single special agency at work for the spread of Christianity, and seemed to have not even a clear conception that its *wider dissemination* was a *paramount duty;* it is not surprising that she should have given just this form, to her impressions of the Gospel, and the work of the ministry, as found in the Ordinal: and it is not any more wonderful, that the constant study, and use of these same words, both in England, and this country, where the Ordinal is the same substantially, should have continued this imperfect conception of the truth of God, and excluded that higher appreciation of its power in the earth, which belongs to it, as the Saviour's agency for bringing *all* men to His cross, and the salvation it has so freely purchased. There is nowhere, the clear and distinct appreciation of the fact, that each minister is one of a vast army sent forth, not simply to hold present possessions, and guard the property, and homes of those, by whom it is maintained; but to make *inroads* into the *enemy's territory*, and bring back, to dutiful allegiance, the *alienated and rebellious.* But the prominent idea throughout the whole is, that each is simply a shepherd, to whom is confided the care, and guardianship of a specific flock.

Another explanation of this wrong impression, is found in the fact, that in the opinion of very many good persons, and exemplary Christians, the Church does not encourage, and has no sympathy with, what is denominated, an *emotional* religion—that she does not, and should not, favor

any great amount of zeal, earnestness, and enthusiasm, and that she carefully represses everything like fervor, and excitement. There is undoubtedly much truth in these statements; and there need be no surprise, when we study, and examine, the history of religious excitements, and extravagancies—a mere *sensuous emotionalism*, during the last century or more: for what words can portray their sad results, in many minds, and throughout large communities? and therefore agreeably to a common law, we have only gone, it is feared, too near the opposite extreme, of a *frigid formalism*, or a most withering, and depressing *lukewarmness*. It was *this*, that lost to the Church the Wesleys, and their peculiar followers, during the last century. It has since kept from her, a large number, who were repelled by her seeming, or real want of earnestness, and stirring life. And it must be confessed, that a piety, formed after such a model, may have the marks, lines, and dimensions, prescribed by one part of the Gospel, but it will be deficient in the unction, fragrance, and burning love, enjoined by another. The spiritual temple, reared according to such standards, will have many attractive ornaments, and beautiful proportions, and elicit warm commendation from many pleased admirers; but it will have little, of the *live spark* from the altar, to bring light and warmth, and holy glow, such as would make it a beacon in all the surrounding darkness. It is sometimes more like that creation of a noted personage in years gone by, the ice-palace of Russia's ancient queen.* To the observer it was attractive, with its massive walls, its high-built throne; beautiful with its

"Long wavy wreaths
Of flowers, that feared no enemy but *warmth*;"

* Cowper's Task, Book 5, Line 150.

and gorgeous with its lights of all hues, gleaming through the clear transparency; but

> "'Twas transient in its nature, as in show
> 'Twas durable: as worthless, as it seemed
> Intrinsically precious; to the foot
> Treach'rous, and false; it *smiled*, and it was *cold*."

It requires no angel's tongue, nor light of inspiration, to reveal, that such a piety, is without expansive growth, and progress; and never will care to impart to others, even the little blessing with which it is endowed. But it is the very nature of *zeal*, to *diffuse* itself—to go *from home*—to seek for *subjects*, to make partners of its *treasure*. And it is not necessarily lawless, and extravagant; for there is a zeal, that can be tempered with knowledge—an earnestness, that is perfectly consistent with the exercise of reason, judgment, and discrimination: and an enthusiasm, that need not blind clear perception, dispense with wholesome rules of conduct—override all prudence, and forethought, and rush wildly, to final disappointment, and disaster. All heavenly bodies are not necessarily *comets*, nor *meteors*, nor *falling stars;* and yet they adorn the firmanent, and dispel night's gloomy, and impenetrable darkness. The highest exemplification of order, uniformity, obedience of law, and perfect system, is the sun in heaven; the one common source of light, heat, cheerfulness, and life. The Church, therefore, need not cease to be the instrument, and channel, of spiritual light, and love—need not necessarily inculcate a cold formalism, and repress the fervor, and enthusiasm of her children: because she is the very embodiment of the most perfect religious system—takes pleasure in following a fixed, and admirable routine of law, and order; and moves in her annual cycle, with the same regularity, as

does the one common light of the material universe. But by awakening zeal, and ardor—by stirring the depths of every soul—commending the example of Christ, and His Apostles, and calling forth whatever of energy, and fervor, is possessed by her household, she will make herself most effectually among her enemies "terrible as an army with banners,"* and become "a name and a praise"† throughout the land.

The aggressive character of the Church is not rightly appreciated, because there is yet, too prevalent, that injurious impression, that it is more particularly the Church of the wealthy, the intelligent, and those elevated in social position; rather than the poor, the illiterate, and those found in the humbler walks of life: and moreover that it has been suited to the tastes, opinions, and condition, of the former, while it is thought not well capacitated to make much progress among the latter; much less receive the hearty support of the *masses*. The effort has been made, during years gone by, and is too much even now, to gain the exclusive favor of the influential: the idea prevails that no enterprize can prosper without it; and that it is almost useless, to attempt to plant the Church, in any region, where such an element of strength cannot be found. In how many places, the Church has stood for years, making no progress—without life and energy, because of this proverbial impression, that it belongs to a *class*, and no one out of it can find a welcome within her fold. How often in our larger cities, this idea is too truly realized, and churches are found so effectually banded together, by themselves—in their worship, intercourse, and labors, that the *commonalty*, so called, are never seen, as inheritors of the same nature, and destined to stand

* Song of Solomon vi. 4. † Zephaniah iii. 20.

before the same judgment seat. The first live in a region by themselves, so different, so elevated, so inaccessible; that those below, cannot aspire to association with them. The barriers between them are as effectual, as if they did not have similar features—speak a common language, nor expect a common resting-place in the dust of the ground. And such awe do they inspire among the ignorant, so inexhaustible seem their resources, such a charmed life do they appear to wear, and at such an immeasurable distance, do they appear to be removed; that if we can compare men to things, and Christian men are called "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord;"* they may be said to have an appropriate description in Ruskin's "Glory of the Alpine Pines," when he writes so expressively. "Magnificent I say, sometimes almost terrible. Other trees, tufting, crag, or hill, yield to the form, and sway of the ground, clothe it with soft compliance, partly its subject, partly its flatterers, partly its comforters. But the pine is serene resistance." "You cannot reach them, those trees never hear the great common voice of nature—they are far above all sound but the winds. No foot ever stirred fallen leaf of theirs."† How true is all this of the isolation, want of interest, and sympathy, with the great *human heart;* and how much of it we find, to deaden the life, and check the progress of Christianity, in the world. How can there be the faintest conception of its expanding life, and assimilating nature, when they thus place it in one rigid mould, or confine it in swathing bands, in order to dwarf it, according to *their* ideas of God's *aggressive* power, destined to fill the whole earth. See, how in defiance of such efforts, the Church sometimes

* Isaiah lxi. 3. † Daily Paper.

bursts those bands, leaps from its limited receptacle, goes out of the class, and ranks, of the affluent and refined, and finds a home among the illiterate, and humble. Has she not formed almost a whole nation, in the mother country; and where can you find truth more thoroughly ingrained, than in the minds of the multitude, in that thickly peopled land? And whenever our own ministry go forth here, in "the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel,"* willing "to spend, and be spent for the sake of Christ, and the salvation of souls,"† do not "the common people hear them gladly?"‡ and do we not find their love as sincere, their labors as abundant, and their offerings as liberal, as those of the earthly great, when you consider their varied circumstances? Does not the Church thus prove herself a *diffusive* power among the very class of persons, to whose preferences, sentiments, and conditions, she is thought unsuited? During the usurpation of Cromwell, to give a single example, an association was formed in England for the conversion of the Indians in the then British American Colonies of New England, and it is still an incorporated body, known as the New England Company.§ Its missions are now in Canada, where they were transferred after the Revolution; and, though Puritan in their origin, are strictly Church of England, under the supervision of the nearest Bishops; the reason assigned for this by the Company being, that they find these the most efficient, and successful; a valuable testimony to the truth that the Church, with her doctrine, and discipline, as left by Christ, and His Apostles, is better suited to her Lord's work, than all the modern schemes which the last three hundred years have been so prolific in providing."

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* Romans xv. 29.

† 2 Cor. xii. 15.

‡ St. Mark xii. 37.

§ Church Journal, No. 531. Huron.

There is a low estimate of the aggressive character of the Gospel in the Church, because of the prevailing impression of our weakness, and that clergymen of the very best abilities, and attainments, are necessary to plant it in those places, where now it is unknown. There can be no doubt, that if we feel that we have not the strength, and means, of doing a certain work, it is very easy to reach the conclusion, that it is not required at our hands. God does not ask of us impossibilities. It is also true, that in those parts of our own State, where the Church is unplanted, there is a vast amount of prejudice and ignorance—the unfavorable influence of education in other religious systems—and a deadening *indifferentism*, that is akin to the most dangerous infidelity; to remove which would seem to require men of the very largest attainments, who are now filling the most responsible posts in the Church. But in yielding to such a conviction, are we not allowing ourselves to be governed by the simple mathematical law of proportion, which guides the husbandman in measuring his seed, according to the surface to be covered, and the engineer in securing a motive power, corresponding to the body to be moved? We must not forget, as Christians, that there are laws in *physics*, that do not find a place in *spiritual* things; and that although the Gospel is to be extended by human agents, they have never been proportioned to the results actually accomplished. We must bear in mind "that there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many, or by few."* "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."† "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation."‡ And are we not as much astray in the

* 1 Samuel xiv. 6. † Zecariah iv. 6. ‡ Isaiah lx. 22.

importance we attach to the labors, and abilities of the more prominent of the clergy, and the little value we give to those filling inferior positions? The public estimate of the clerical brethren is too much affected by the question, whether they come from the city, or some rural district; while it is believed that the figures will very often show, that the humble man of God, in some retired field, has enjoyed more of the divine blessing, and can, relatively, present more seals to his ministry, than he, who has filled the largest space in the public eye, and been followed by multitudes. If the latter, with the fifteen hundred, or two thousand souls committed to his charge, has an average of only thirty, for confirmation in each year, and the former out of his one hundred and fifty or two hundred, presents only eight; a very simple arithmetical operation shows, that the country clergyman's proportion is one candidate for every eighteen, or twenty-five parishioners; while that of the city rector is one for every fifty, or sixty-six; showing an increase of considerably more than double, in favor of the faithful and laborious country clergy.* I do not attempt to offer any explanation of these facts; my only purpose being to show that the greatest, and most prominent of the clergy are not necessary to enable us to make the Church a growing power among men.

We fall into quite as great an error in our appreciation of the influence of education, in other religious bodies, prejudice, and ignorance of our principles, as obstacles to our progress. No region can probably be found where these have had greater weight than in the only large city of the Western part of the Diocese, and its immediate vicinity,† And yet, during

* See Parochial Reports.

† Pittsburgh.

the last ten years, the twelve Protestant bodies, who had all the advantages of early settlement, and the best opportunities for training a large population, increased annually by a very considerable emigration from abroad, have not added an average of two new places of worship; while the Church, late in being planted there, with little gain from abroad, and constantly obliged to encounter, and overcome, these obstacles, has erected eight new edifices, and obtained a prominent place in the community; while of two hundred and fourteen candidates for confirmation in a single parish, one hundred and ten were not found within her pale;* so that we may believe she can be planted in *every* other place, as she has a blessing for *every* member of the human family.† The

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* St. Peter's Church.

† In fuller explanation of this statement, may be given the following extract from the author's sermon on the tenth anniversary of the opening of St. Peter's Church, Pittsburgh, December 21, 1862:

"*Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters.*"—Isaiah xxxii. 20.

"It is said of the Apostles, after the Saviour's ascension into heaven, 'they went forth, and preached *everywhere*, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following.'* 'This sowing beside all waters,' was made a part of the charter of the Church for all time—one of the great conditions of her growth, and success, and one of the important marks, and evidences of her genuineness, and authenticity. And what is true of the whole, is of each particular branch of the Church in every country, district, city, or considerable town. And yet there have always been those who have thought that in certain places, and in certain conditions of society, it was useless to attempt to plant the Gospel, as we have received it—that there must be very favorable circumstances—a number of pledged supporters, and some degree of strength, before there can be any encouraging hopes of success. This has been eminently true of this city and neighborhood. The Church of our affections and choice, known as the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, has been established here since an early period; but for a long time it was so feeble, that it barely had an existence. No one seemed to think that it could ever have much increase here: even its best friends, and devoutest communicants, did not labor for great additions, because they felt that the community was fixed

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* St. Mark xvi. 20.

benediction of the almighty is not waiting, exclusively, upon great intellectual gifts, nor exalted learning, nor those attractions which will win mere popular favor; but upon unselfishness, humility, love for souls, and a burn-

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in their systems of faith, and so hostile to her principles, many being of Scotch-Irish descent, that all labor would be in vain. Trinity Church was the only parish in the city, and all this region of country (except a small one at Chartier's Creek, seven miles distant, but of short duration), till about 1832, thirty years ago, when a number of persons organized Christ Church, Alleghany City—not because Trinity was uncomfortably full, but principally on account of the distance. In 1837, St. Andrew's Church, Pittsburgh, had its origin, primarily because of disaffection with the ministrations at the parent church, rather than for want of accommodation there, though it was well filled. St. Paul's Church, Laceyville, now a part of the city, was built and consecrated in 1838, because Dr. Lacey, its Rector, was at the head of a Female Seminary on the same square, and wished to have a church convenient. A small congregation existed at Lawrenceville for a time, but was soon dispersed. For more than fourteen years no new church was added up to 1852, though the population had greatly increased: and the three that were organized during the six years before 1838, did not arise from any pressing necessity to provide for the increasing growth of the Church, nor because their friends were able to perceive any great prospects of immediate success. There was everywhere the conviction, that this was an unfavorable soil, and that our progress must be necessarily slow, unless a large population were to flow in, kindly disposed to the Church, or actually identified with her. These were waters beside which it would be almost in vain to sow, and the blessing could not be expected. But in 1850-51-52, a truer appreciation of duty was manifested—a better conception of the Church's work and destiny, began to prevail, and although very gratifying progress had been made before, yet it was limited to one or two churches: but then the desire was for *expansion*, and *extension*—'sowing beside all waters,'—making the principles of the Church known—furnishing increased accommodations; and as a consequence of this awakened zeal, faith and liberality, this costly and beautiful temple arose, as a most significant first fruit—the pledge of a most bountiful and blessed harvest.* And yet at that period there was no withdrawal of opposition—no marked dimunition of ignorance and prejudice—no great change of feeling favorable to the claims of the Church: but the fostering of a traditionary hostility, circulation of misrepresentations and suspicions, identifying her with Rome, and her surperstitions, so that worldly prudence, and wisdom might have prompted her to ask herself the question, how can you expect a harvest from such an uncongenial soil?

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* St. Peter's Church, Pittsburgh.

ing faith, which give strength to ordinary abilities, and respectable acquirements. There is no such eloquence, as is found in a holy example, and a devoted life, spent in doing good to others. What do we see in the world, and the common affairs of men? "Franklin is said to have attributed his success as a public man, not to his talents, or power of speaking, for these were but moderate, but to his known integrity of character."* "Hence it was," he says, "that I had so much weight with my fellow-citizens. I was but a bad speaker, never eloquent, subject to much hesitation in my choice of words, hardly correct in language, and yet I generally carried my

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how gain a foothold in the country of an enemy so strong, and so long established? how make any progress when almost all others are active in a common cause against you? I propose to let the facts in their, and our history, for the last ten years, from December 1852 to December 1862, make answer to these seemingly hard, and discouraging interrogatories. During this period, in this city, and within a circuit of about five miles, with all the advantages of early settlement, or long residence, or both combined, the Old School Presbyterians have added two new organizations, and places of worship; the New School, *none;* the Cumberland, *none;* the Reformed, *none;* English Lutherans, *one;* German Reformed, *one;* German Lutheran, *none*; Baptists, *one;* Episcopal Methodists, *six;* Protestant Methodists, *one;* Associate, *none;* Associate Reformed, during the first six years, *five;* when connected with the Associate, as United Presbyterians, *four*. During the same period, the Protestant Episcopal Church has added to her list, St. Peter's, Grant Street; St. Luke's, Chartier's Creek; St. James', Penn Street; Grace, Mt. Washington; St. John's, Lawrenceville; Calvary, East Liberty; St. Matthew's, Etna; and St. Mark's, Birmingham; making eight new church edifices, which added to the four previously existing, gives us twelve in all. Such has been the rate of increase in the number of our places of worship, during the last ten years, as compared with the other principal Protestant bodies, and under the serious disadvantages in which she has been placed; the aggregate of their growth being *twenty-one* new edifices, and ours *eight*, more than one-third of their united additions, though they were twelve organized bodies, and we but one—they not *doubling* their number, while ours has been *trebled*. Surely here is a sufficient argument to show that education, ignorance and prejudice, have to yield to the force of the principles which we hold, love, and teach."

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* Banner of the Cross, Vol. 21, No. 17.

point." It was said of the first Emperor Alexander of Russia, that his personal character was equivalent to a constitution. During the wars of the Fronde, Montaigne was the only man amongst the French gentry, who kept his castle gates unbarred; and it is said of him, that his personal character was worth more to him than a regiment of horse. When Stephen of Colonna fell into the hands of his base assailants, and they asked him in derision, "Where is now your fortress?" "'*Here*,' was his bold reply, placing his hand upon his heart." If such a principle in men in secular positions, have this power, what an element of strength, and good, and highest blessing, may it not become, when baptized into the more exalted attribute of a saintly piety, and conspicuously seen in the minister of God's word and sacraments? It does not fail to become a spiritual fortress, where no enemy can assail him; he needs no better body guard, when his greatest foes from the world, insinuation, suspicion, calumny, and malice would attack him; and it disarms opposition, silences unbelief, gives force to his arguments, unction to his exhortations, tenderness to his rebukes, and that grace, and attractiveness to each word and deed, that make him ever successful, in restoring the wanderer, bringing back the alienated, and saving the lost.

Having now exhibited some of the sources of this want of appreciation of the aggressive, and diffusive character of the Church, it only remains to show what would probably be some of the important consequences of the removal of this wrong impression. The laity would at once find themselves in a new position, and a new sphere of labor would be open before them. They would see themselves parts of a living body, intrusted with the extension of inestimable blessings, to every

part of this widely extended Commonwealth. And could they not find a way to effect it? When the aspirant for elevated political place, knows that he must have the suffrages of a majority of the people, does he not make a way to every county, town, and neighborhood, through personal effort, or the instrumentality of others, or the mighty power of the press? When the business houses of this great city know that their profits are depending upon the spreading their names, and character abroad, they discover ways, and means of accomplishing the object. So our awakened laymen would have no difficulty in furnishing means of giving the leaven of God's truth, to those who are now ignorant of its hopes, and comforts. Time would be found for more personal labors, pecuniary means would be more freely bestowed, sons would be consecrated to the ministry, in will, and intention, even in infancy; and then trained with especial reference to the sacred calling; and there would be strong crying unto "the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest."*

The clergy, too, would at once give up this idea of their work, as a mere *pastorate*, and spread broader their nets, and launch out further, that they might gather more abundantly of every kind. Each one, dropping the exclusive title of *Pater familias*, would associate, with the parental work, a care, and anxiety for all, who might be without the circle of the spiritual home. He would carry the Church to all outlying districts within his reach—make it known to those who may be ignorant of its claims, or prejudiced against its principles, and ceremonies, and show himself equally the friend of "high and low, rich and poor, one with another."† The whole ministry would be constantly

* St. Matthew ix. 38. † Psalm xlix. 2.

stirring themselves up to the great, and momentous work, before them, of striving to plant the Church so generally, that it would be accessible, and known to every one, however remote, and isolated. By appeals to themselves, and to their people—by measures for calling forth, and uniting their energies, and means—by most earnest and devoted labors, at home and abroad, and by constant looking to Him, with whom is "the excellency of the power,"* they would be able to gather a harvest, which modern annals have never yet recorded.

So, too, a right appreciation of the Church, as a great aggressive power, would change our whole conceptions of the Episcopal office, and the duties of a Bishop in the Church of Christ. It is worthy of especial notice, that in the enumeration of his varied obligations, these three are made prominent, "to spread the Gospel," "to bring again the outcasts, and seek the lost."† But with what show of reason, can he be restrained within the narrow limits that now confine his energies, talents and example, in view of such a setting forth of responsibility, as these words embody? Is not their primary idea, *aggression?* If the Gospel is spread abroad, must it not be where it is unknown? If a man is lost, must we not go after him, and seek him, and finding him, bring him back with the constraint of gentleness, and love? If a man is an outcast, will he voluntarily change his course, make the first effort to return, when he knows not that he will be accepted, but may be repulsed? or rather, must not some one go after him, and assure him of a welcome? and the highest authority tells us it is primarily, a Bishop's work. But when he is assigned to a field so extensive, that he has neither phys-

* 2 Cor. iv. 7. † See prayer and exhortation in the consecration of Bishops.

ical, nor mental power, nor time, for his labor—when by custom, popular impression, and tradition, he is as effectually shut up to the routine of ordination, confirmation, consecration of churches, and preaching to the assemblies gathered on those occasions, as if there were prescript laws forbidding other duties; how can we ever expect him to *lead* the *way*, as did the Apostles, in visiting the waste places, or those where truth is misrepresented, and counterfeited? how ever act as *pioneer*, as did the primitive Bishops, in new regions, and among the ignorant, and degraded, in order to "spread abroad the Gospel, bring again the outcasts, and seek the lost?" Why should we persevere in perpetuating a defective office, and institution of the Church of God, dwarf her growth, and shut men out of His kingdom; because we are afraid of the cost, or that the servant to whom is entrusted the duty of leading the way in our unexplored regions, and raising the standard of the cross, may be obliged to practice great, and extraordinary self-denial, and live plainly? How else, but by sending the chief Pastors first, to open the way, will you do the work? how so effectually remove the stigma from this branch of the Apostolic Church, of being unrepresented in more than one-half of this vast Commonwealth? If it be necessary, let the field be curtailed to *one-fourth* its present extent—let the living be that of an ordinary parish minister in one of our smaller cities, if no better can be provided—let the Bishops, in order to pass these mountains, follow their winding paths, and reach the villages, and hamlets, found upon their slopes and summits, or amid their vallies—become *riders on horses, or on foot, with staff in hand* go forth, so that we may have some one that we may follow, some one to direct, aid, and encourage us in

"making the wilderness and the solitary place glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom."*

Another result of a right appreciation of the true office, and mission of the Church, would be the publishing of her principles, order, and system of doctrine, and worship, in numerous places, where they would meet the exigencies, and supply the defects, which have been caused by the varied forms of error, that have prevailed during the last century. There is no need of telling you how many religious systems have become effete, and lost all hold of the public mind—how fanaticism has spread desolation, and a mere emotionalism has consumed the very life of that element of truth that was once possessed; and, therefore, there are many that would embrace the Gospel, as set forth by the Church, with avidity, if they had the opportunity of hearing it. When that large accession was made to the Church in Connecticut, embracing so many distinguished persons, with the President and other officers of Yale College, and the whole land was alive with excitement,† Dr. Johnson, one of the most prominent, when asked for the reasons of the great change, gave the following, among others: "The wild enthusiasm that long obtained among themselves, on which occasions their own managements were in many instances so extravagant, and ridiculous, as tended vastly more to drive their people into the Church, than anything we ever did to draw them over to it;" and he represents the people so bewildered by the teaching, and extravagancies of Whitfield, and others, "that they could find no rest for the sole of their foot, till they retired into the Church, as their only ark of safety."‡ And has

* Isaiah xxxv. 1. † See Dr. Sprague's Episcopal Pulpit—Article Dr. Johnson.
‡ Historical Collections of Prot. Epis. Church, p. 148, Note.

there been a decade of years since that period, when similar immoderate enthusiasm has not produced like results? and would not the Church find a readiness in such places, to receive her teaching, and welcome her blessings, if she would but proffer them? We rejoice in the beautiful example, varied learning, and earnest self-consecration of the devoted Bishop who laid down his life on the bank of the Allegheny, while wending his way to a great moral waste in the extreme Western portion of the State, and we mourn for his loss, as children for a parent, or brethren for a wise elder brother;* but we cannot forget that till fourteen years of age he was ignorant of the Church and its worship, and that his first knowledge of her principles, and liturgy, was received from an itinerant missionary for the time, now the Rt. Rev. Jackson Kemper, D.D., Bishop of Wisconsin, exploring the desolate places of that and other destitute regions.† If her *aggressive* character then prepared the way for such an acquisition to her *communion*, her *ministry*, her *Episcopate;* may we not expect, that among the young in now unvisited regions, many may be found, who will be attracted to her beautiful order, and quiet ways, and some one or more, equally endowed, for her higher offices? If we now feel that *such a convert* is worth a *life long* mission, why should we not make more ventures of faith, why not inaugurate the measures for sending her chief pastors to every county seat, and considerable town, to prepare the way for the inferior minister, who may "labor in the word and doctrine,"‡ among the alienated, the ignorant, the outcasts, and the lost, "till Christ be formed in them,"§ the hope,

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* Rt. Rev. S. Bowman, D.D.

† Ch. Review, January 1862, p. 500.

‡ 1 Timothy v. 17.

§ Galatians iv. 19.

the ground, the source of eternal glory? Then should we more fully realize that the kingdom of God is like unto *leaven*—diffusive, assimilating, and transforming; like unto the *placid current*, enriching, beautifying, and blessing, as it noiselessly flows; like unto an *advancing army*, without *material* weapons, because it owns only that Commander, who is the great "Captain of our Salvation," and who "draws with the cords of a man, and the bands of love."* Then should we begin to understand, and see fulfilled, those glowing words of one of the hardest workers of our day, and generation, when he said, "A working Church will be a Church of power. See how the sinews of the racer string themselves with swiftness. See how the muscles of the boxer harden into strength. See how the limb, disused, becomes enervate, and emaciated. Power must be used, to grow. More than that, power must be used, to stay. It is God's law in universal nature. It is true in physics. It is true of mind. It is true in morals. It is true of Churches. It is true in Heaven. Is it not written, of the angels, that 'they rest not day and night?'" And did He not say, in words so vast, that we but catch the shadow of their grandeur, and are overwhelmed by that: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work?" It is Almightiness that will always work. And then, the Church will come nearest His Almightiness, when it shall work like Him, filling the earth with her presence, and energizing humanity with her grace. Thus shall that glorious day be brought to dawn, of which the Apostle speaks in words too broad for earth, too deep for hell, too high for aught, but Heaven: "Then cometh the end; when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God,

* Hosea xi. 4.

even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power; for He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under his feet. And, when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son, also, Himself be subject unto Him, that put all things under Him, that God may be all, in all." And then, the practical conclusion, an application so immediate, direct, and personal, that it seems meant expressly for this occasion. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."*

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* Bishop Doane—Ninth Charge, p. 20. A Working Church.